



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE AGENCY
PLANNING SERVICES DIVISION
County of Placer

HEARING DATE: October 22, 2020
ITEM NO.: 4
TIME: 3:50 P.M.

TO: Placer County Planning Commission
FROM: Development Review Committee
DATE: October 15, 2020
SUBJECT: **GENERAL PLUMBING SUPPLY SIGN PERMIT**
APPLICANT APPEAL OF THE PLANNING DIRECTOR'S DENIAL OF A SIGN PERMIT
(PLN20-00134)
STATUTORY EXEMPTION
SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT 5 (GUSTAFSON)

COMMUNITY PLAN AREA: Auburn / Bowman Community Plan

GENERAL PLAN / COMMUNITY PLAN DESIGNATION: Mixed Use

ZONING: C2-UP-Dc-AO (Community Commercial, combining Use Permit, combining Design Review, combining Aircraft Overflight)

ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER: 053-060-043-000

STAFF PLANNER: Patrick Dobbs, Senior Planner

LOCATION: 13957 Bowman Rd. in the North Auburn area

APPLICANT / APPELLANT: Richard Sampognaro of Capital City Signs, Inc.

APPEAL

The Planning Commission is being requested to conduct a public hearing to consider an appeal filed by the applicant, Richard Sampognaro of Capital City Signs, Inc., (hereinafter appellant) of the Planning Director's August 19, 2020 denial of a sign permit for a 24-foot tall freestanding monument sign structure with two separate attached signs. The upper sign consists of a 4'- 6" tall by 12' wide (54 square foot) internally lit upper cabinet sign with white background and blue "General Plumbing Supply" lettering adjacent to a gold and blue corporate logo symbol. The lower sign includes a 5'-6" tall by 7'-10" wide (42 square foot) full-color light emitting diode (LED) digital display changeable copy reader board. The proposed cumulative sign copy area for both the cabinet sign and LED display is 96 square feet.

The specific issue of contention was the proposed full-color (LED) animated display changeable copy reader board sign. The appellant contends that Placer County Code does allow LED signs if the changing advertisement cycle rates exceed three seconds. Placer County Code, Chapter 17, Article 17.54, Section 17.54.170, subsection (D)(2) states:

Prohibited Signs and Sign Materials:

Animated signs – Signs with any moving, rotating, flashing or otherwise animated light or component, except for the time and temperature displays and electronic changeable copy signs with cycle rates longer than three seconds, and traditional barber poles.

The appellant's statement of appeal and supporting materials are included as Attachment A to this report.

Existing Sign



Proposed Sign

Auburn, CA

ELEVATION

PAGE 2 OF 3


| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Type: | D/F Illuminated Monument w/ Top Cabinet and LED reader board |
| Illumination: | Principal LED - Qwik Mod 3, white |
| Square Footage: | 100 sq ft Cabinet, 42 sq ft LED board |
| To Grade: | 24'-0" |
| Jurisdiction: | Placer County |
| APN #: | 053-060-043-000 |



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SCALE: 1/2" = 2'

PER 2019 CEC
PER 2019 CBC

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|------------------|---|
|  <p>CLIENT: General Plumbing Supply CONTACT: Wendy ADDRESS: 13937 Bowman Rd Auburn CA PHONE: 916-348-9378 EST/INVOICE: 45571/45789</p> | <p>JOB SITE: Same ADDRESS: Same EMAIL:</p> | <p>4/18/20 Permit Drawing 6/18/20 Permit Revision</p> | <p>K1 KH</p> | <p>This is an original drawing by Digital City Signage. It is submitted for your personal use in connection with a project being planned for you by DCS, Inc. It is not to be reproduced, copied, or modified in any manner without the written permission of DCS, Inc. Please Note: Colors as displayed on this Computer Drawing are for representation purposes only. Actual colors of final products may vary.</p> |
| | | | | |

CALIFORNIA CONTRACTOR LICENSE NO. 753940

NOTE: COST FOR PROVIDING ELECTRICAL WIRING TO SIGN AREA / ALL REQUIRED PERMITS AND INSPECTIONS ARE NOT INCLUDED IN SIGN PROPOSAL

CEQA COMPLIANCE

The proposed action to deny the project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to Placer County Code section 18.36.010(G) and CEQA Guidelines sections 15061(b)(4) and 15270 (i.e. projects which a public agency rejects or disapproves). In the event the Planning Commission determines that the project warrants further consideration, the project would need to be brought back to a future Planning Commission hearing with proposed findings supporting approval of the sign permit.

PUBLIC NOTICES AND REFERRAL FOR COMMENTS

Appropriate agencies, public interest groups, and citizens were sent copies of the public hearing notice. Community Development Resource Agency staff and the Engineering and Surveying Division, the Department of Public Works, Facilities Management, the Building Services Division, Parks, Environmental Health Services, the Air Pollution Control District and the Placer Fire Protection District were transmitted copies of the application for review and comment. No public comments were received at the time of report preparation.

BACKGROUND

The subject property comprises approximately 2.5 acres and is developed with a commercial structure currently leased to General Plumbing Supply. The parcel is triangular shaped and its topography is flat. The property is currently zoned General Commercial, combining Use Permit required, combining Design Corridor, combining Aircraft Overflight (C2-UP-Dc-AO). The adjacent parcel to the south has identical zoning and is approximately 0.2 acres in size and is developed with a single family residence. Parcels to the west range in area from approximately 0.3 acres to 16 acres in size and are zoned Residential Agricultural, combining minimum building site of 100,000 square feet, combining Aircraft Overflight (RA-B-100-AO) and are improved with the Machado Orchard and accessory residences. The adjacent parcel to the north is 10.6 acres and is zoned Open Space, combining Aircraft Overflight and is developed with the Southern Pacific Railroad. The area to the east of the subject site is the Interstate 80 corridor.

Sign Permit Application

On May 20, 2020, the appellant submitted an application to the Planning Services Division for a sign permit to construct a 30-foot tall freestanding monument sign with two separate sign types. The upper sign consists of a 4'-6" tall by 12' wide (54 square foot) internally lit upper cabinet sign with white background and blue "General Plumbing Supply" lettering adjacent to a gold and blue corporate logo symbol. The lower sign includes a 5'-6" tall by 7'-10" wide (42 square foot) full-color LED digital display changeable copy reader board. The proposed cumulative sign copy area for both the cabinet sign and LED display is 96 square feet.

Staff telephoned the appellant in early June during the initial application review process to discuss the County's sign standards and guidelines. Objective standards discussed were focused on maximum height allowed for signs, and the location of the proposed sign in relation to utility lines and likely utility easements. The base zoning of the subject project site is General Commercial (C2) which allows for a maximum sign height of 25-feet, or the height of the existing building, whichever is less. Therefore, the initially proposed 30-foot tall sign could not be approved without a Variance. Additionally, photo-simulations submitted with the application showed overhead utility lines above the proposed sign, although no easements were shown on the site plan.

Following that initial telephone conversation, the appellant submitted revised plans with a proposed reduced maximum sign height of 24-feet. Additionally, the location of the proposed sign was shifted to be more internal to the site to address the potential issue of easement encroachment, however, no easements are shown on the project site plan so it is still unclear whether any portion of the proposed sign encroaches into an easement. Further, the revised plans still include the LED sign.

June 29, 2020 Application Incomplete Letter

On June 29, 2020, staff issued an incomplete application letter to the appellant (Attachment B) citing the project's inconsistency with the County Sign Ordinance section 17.54.120(D)(2) (Prohibited Signs and Sign Material) that prohibits animated signs other than for time and temperature displays with changeable copy signs with cycle rates longer than three seconds, and traditional barber poles.

Changeable copy LED signage is typically associated with the image and branding of entertainment venues or used to communicate public service announcements that requires posting frequently changing information. Based on the County's sign design guidelines it is staff's opinion that the public perception of LED advertising is out of character with surrounding commercial businesses in the Bowman area. Furthermore, LED digital displays typically use bright light sources and allow for a multitude of colors which are discouraged by the County's sign design guidelines, therefore staff requested additional information and modifications to the proposed sign to comply with Placer County sign standards and guidelines.

In their June 30, 2020, email response (Attachment C) the appellant states, among other things, that the proposed LED sign image cycle rates will exceed three seconds and therefore is consistent with Placer County Code Section 17.54.170(D)(2). The appellant stated they would not consent to remove the LED sign component and intended to appeal the Planning Director's decision if the sign permit application was denied.

August 19, 2020 Director's Denial of Sign Permit Request

Following no resubmittal of revised plans and the appellant's stated unwillingness to remove the LED sign, on August 19, 2020, the Planning Director denied the sign permit request (Attachment D) based on the analysis provide below.

The specific issue that resulted in the initial incomplete determination was the proposed 5'-6" tall by 7'-10" wide (42 square foot) full-color light-emitting diode (LED) digital display changeable copy reader board sign. In the incomplete application letter staff requested the LED sign component be removed from the proposed sign for the following reasons:

- Proposed sign is not compatible with the rural character of the surrounding Bowman area community;
- Type of sign proposed is discouraged in the County's Sign Design Guidelines; and
- Animated signs are prohibited pursuant to subsection 17.54.170(D)(2) of the Placer County Code.

Staff has reviewed the applicable sections of the Placer County Code, as well as correspondence by the applicant. At issue is the fact that two separate code sections conflict with each other regarding allowable illumination of signs.

Section 17.54.170(D)(2) (Prohibited Signs and Sign Materials – Animated Signs) states: "Signs with moving, rotating, flashing, or otherwise animated light or component, except for time and temperature displays and electronic changeable copy signs with cycle rates longer than three seconds, and traditional barber poles."

Section 17.54.170 (F) (Illumination of Signs) states: "Any lighted sign shall be illuminated only by continuous and stationary light sources. . . Flashing or intermittent lights are allowed only as provided in subsection (D)(2) of this section (Prohibited Signs and Sign Materials), for time and temperature displays."

While Section (D)(2) allows for time and temperature displays as well as electronic changeable copy signs with cycle rates longer than three seconds, Section (F) prohibits all intermittent lighting, with exceptions only for time and temperature displays.

Placer County Code Section 17.02.050 assigns the responsibility and authority to interpret the requirements of the County's Zoning Ordinance to the Planning Director. In addition, Section 17.02.050(D)(1) provides the Planning Director methodology to evaluate conflicting provisions in the Ordinance, by establishing that, "in cases where conflicts occur between different requirements of this chapter (Chapter 17, the Zoning Ordinance) then the most restrictive (section) shall apply".

As provided in the analysis above, it is the determination of the Planning Director that Section 17.54.170(F), which prohibits intermittent lights (changeable copy), with the exception of time and temperature displays, is more restrictive than Section 17.54.170(D)(2) which also allows for electronic changeable copy signs with cycle rates longer than three seconds and traditional barber poles.

Therefore, pursuant to Section 17.02.050(D)(1), it is the determination of the Planning Director that LED changeable copy signs, other than for time and temperature displays, and regardless of the length of time of the cycle rate, are determined to be inconsistent with the Zoning Ordinance.

LETTER OF APPEAL

On August 24, 2020, an appeal (Attachment A) of the Planning Director's action to deny the sign permit was filed by Capital City Signs, Inc. The appellant's letter contends several issues with the Planning Director's decision to deny the sign permit, including, but not limited to:

1. Appellant first contacted the County in March 2020 and was provided information for the land use allowances, setbacks, height, and type of signage allowed.
2. Pursuant to Zoning Ordinance Section 17.54.170(D)(2) (Animated signs) – Signs with any moving, rotating, flashing or otherwise animated light or component, except for the time and temperature displays and electronic changeable copy signs with cycle rates longer than three seconds, and traditional barber poles. The appellant contends the proposed LED sign is permissible because General Plumbing Supply's advertisements cycle rates would exceed three seconds.
3. Plans submitted meets the Code as written. The sign design is very tasteful and would enhance the corridor.

RESPONSES TO APPEAL

Staff has prepared the following responses to the items identified in the appeal letter.

1. The appellant asserts they first contacted the County in March 2020 and were provided information for the land use allowances, setbacks, height, and type of signage allowed.

Staff Response

During staff's review of sign proposal throughout the month of June, staff and the appellant communicated on multiple occasions in both telephone conversations, and several e-mail exchanges, regarding the sign ordinance requirements (including height). County staff recognizes there are conflicting provisions in the current sign ordinance in that the ordinance does not specifically address emerging trends in signage such as LED displays. During their diligence period the appellant was provided full copies of the County's sign ordinance (Sections 17.54.170 through 17.54.200). Whether the information staff provided was not clear to the appellant, during the review process the applicable regulations of the sign ordinance were clearly conveyed to the appellant. On numerous occasions staff offered to work with the appellant on an acceptable alternative sign design that could be approved, however, the appellant rejected staff's recommendation to revise the sign and decided not to remove the LED component.

2. The appellant asserts that pursuant to Section 17.54.170(D)(2) (Animated signs), the proposed LED sign is permissible because General Plumbing Supply's advertisements cycle rates would exceed three seconds.

Staff Response

As provided in the analysis in this report, it is the determination of the Planning Director that Section 17.54.170(F), which prohibits intermittent lights (changeable copy), with the exception of time and temperature displays, is more restrictive than Section 17.54.170(D)(2) which also allows for electronic changeable copy signs with cycle rates longer than three seconds and traditional barber poles. Therefore, pursuant to Section 17.02.050(D)(1), it is the determination of the Planning Director that

LED changeable copy signs, other than for time and temperature displays, and regardless of the length of time of the cycle rate, are determined to be inconsistent with the Zoning Ordinance.

3. The appellant asserts that plans submitted meets the Code as written. The sign design is very tasteful and would enhance the corridor.

Staff Response

A sign-permit for an on-premise sign can only be approved if a determination is made that the proposed sign is consistent with the requirements of the Placer County design guidelines. (See Placer County Code, § 17.54.170(B)(2).) Here, the proposed sign does not meet the intent of the design guidelines for the Auburn/Bowman Community Plan (A/BCP), or the Placer County design guidelines.

Signs are among the most noticeable visual elements of Placer County's village and freeway environment. Signs communicate information about the businesses in the area and the nature and quality of the physical environment. The subject parcel is located within the A/BCP and is within the Scenic Corridor for Interstate 80. The A/BCP describes Interstate 80 as a major circulation route for the nation, the State and Placer County and that special consideration shall be given to development that could further degrade its scenic qualities. The A/BCP also describes the Bowman area as having a rural character and establishes Community Design Element Policy 3.a(11) to protect and enhance the aesthetics of Bowman's scenic corridors:

Encourage and utilize existing programs for protection and enhancement of scenic corridors, including but not limited to, design review, **sign control**, scenic setbacks, density limitations, planned unit developments, grading and tree removal standards, open space easements, and land conservation contracts.

Light Emitting Diode (LED) displays are an emerging trend in signage. This type of signage is much brighter than a "typical" sign seen in Placer County and could be considered to be more of an "urban" element, rather than a "rural" element as detailed above. As a result, LED signage is not considered appropriate for the Bowman area.

The proposed sign also does not meet the following design criteria established within the Placer County Design Guidelines, which contain the following requirements:

Avoid too many different colors on a sign – Too many colors overwhelm the basic function of communication. The colors compete with for the viewer's attention. Limited use of the accent colors can increase legibility, while large areas of competing colors tend to confuse and disturb. The sign colors and materials should be planned in conjunction with the building and storefront design scheme.

Do not use distracting bright light sources for signs – A dazzling, intense light is uncomfortable to look at. If the sign is uncomfortable to look at, people will tend to avoid it and the message.

Use a sign appropriate to the type of business – A sign conveys information about a business image and character. A high activity recreational use, like a theater or restaurant, has a different image than an office use and will therefore require a different "image", possibly "corporate looking" vs. "glitz".

Use a sign appropriate to its nearby visual environment – A sign should comfortably coexist with other visual elements around it, not only on one building but on the buildings surrounding it. Signs are an important part of creating the visual concept and image of Placer County.

Furthermore, the proposed sign does not meet the County's Community Design Manual - Special District Guidelines for the Auburn/Bowman Community Plan Area, which contain the following requirements:

Signs should be pedestrian oriented.

Lighting should be at a pedestrian scale (14 feet or less in height), should be of a decorative type, and should be located along roadways and pathways.

The Placer County Sign Ordinance and the design guidelines are motivated by the need to ensure public safety and minimize the negative visual impacts of signs in a community. The means by which these goals are accomplished are to review the size of signs, their type, placement, and appearance, and, generally, to ensure measures to reduce 'visual clutter.' It is usually not the impact of any one business sign that raises concerns, but the long-term, cumulative impact of many signs within a given area. Here, the proposed LED sign would be a distracting bright light source, it would inherently use many colors that would overwhelm the basic function of communication and would have a greater risk of confusion.

There are examples of changeable copy signs in Placer County, including, but now limited to schools which Placer County does not regulate, and gas station pricing. Placer County previously approved a changeable copy sign for Sutter Hospital. In that instance, Sutter's monument sign had already been constructed and they sought a post-construction approval from the County, which the County did permit subject to limitations based on the non-commercial community benefit the hospital sign provided.

Many community streetscapes and areas along Interstate 80 in western Placer County have accumulated an overabundance of signs that convey more information than a vehicular viewer can understand. This graphic overload results in visual confusion and loss of the individual sign messages. It also leaves a negative visual impression about the area itself.

There are numerous examples of LED signs within more urbanized areas outside of Placer County's jurisdiction (i.e. within cities such as Sacramento, Roseville, etc.). Whether the sign design is perceived as tasteful is subjective to the individual observer. It's staff's opinion that in the case of General Plumbing Supply the LED sign type is not consistent with public expectations for that type of commercial business either. The proposed General Plumbing Supply sign, with the LED display, would detract from the scenic corridor established for this area as well as conflict with the rural character of Bowman.

One of staff's main concerns with the approval of this type of sign is its potential to be precedent setting. While one, individual sign may not significantly affect the aesthetics of a given area, staff believes that there is a high potential for additional service stations, and possibly other businesses, to follow suit and request approval of LED signs. This could lead to a "cumulative" aesthetic impact which, in staff's opinion, would be inconsistent with the intent of the Placer County Design Guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the analysis described above, the Development Review Committee recommends the Planning Commission uphold the decision of the Planning Director and take the following actions:

1. Deny the appeal filed by Richard Sampognaro on behalf of Capital City Signs, Inc.; and
2. Uphold the Planning Director's decision to deny the proposed General Plumbing Supply monument sign supported by the following findings:

FINDINGS

CEQA

The proposed action to deny the project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to Placer County Code section 18.36.010(G) and CEQA Guidelines sections 15061(b)(4) and 15270 (i.e. projects which a public agency rejects or disapproves).

SIGN PERMIT

The proposed sign permit should be denied based on the following findings:

1. The proposed sign is not compatible with the rural character of the surrounding Bowman area community in that it directly conflicts with Auburn Bowman Community Plan design guidelines which call for pedestrian oriented signage, and lighting at a pedestrian scale (14 feet or less in height).
2. The proposed sign is also in conflict with Placer County's Design Guidelines in that the LED sign includes too many different colors; uses distracting bright light sources; and is not appropriate to the type of business and nearby visual environment.
3. Animated signs are prohibited pursuant to subsection 17.54.170(D)(2) of the Placer County Zoning Ordinance, in that Section 17.54.170 (F), which prohibits intermittent lights (changeable copy), with the exception of time and temperature displays, is more restrictive than Section 17.54.170 (D)(2). Section 17.02.050 (D)(1) of the Zoning Ordinance provides the Planning Director methodology to evaluate conflicting provisions in the Ordinance, by establishing that, "in cases where conflicts occur between different requirements of this chapter (Chapter 17, the Zoning Ordinance) then the most restrictive (section) shall apply".
4. The proposed sign has the potential to be precedent setting and thus cumulatively impact the overall scenic quality of both the Bowman Area and the Interstate 80 corridor, in that, if the LED sign is approved there is a high potential for other businesses to follow suit and request approval of LED signs. This could lead to a "cumulative" aesthetic impact which would be inconsistent with the intent of the Placer County Design Guidelines.

Respectfully submitted,



Patrick Dobbs, Senior Planner

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Appeal Documents
Attachment B – June 29, 2020 Application Incomplete Letter
Attachment C – June 30, 2020 Appellant Correspondence
Attachment D – Denial of Sign Permit Request

cc: Steve Pedretti – CDRA Director
EJ Ivaldi – Planning Director
Clayton Cook – County Counsel



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE AGENCY
Planning Services Division

AUBURN OFFICE

3091 County Center Dr., Auburn, CA 95603

530-745-3000/FAX 530-745-3080

Website: www.placer.ca.govEmail: planning@placer.ca.gov**TAHOE OFFICE**

775 North Lake Blvd., Tahoe City, CA 96146

P.O. Box 1909, Tahoe City, CA 96145

530-581-6280/FAX 530-581-6282

APPEALS

Decisions of the Planning Director, Environmental Review Committee, Design/Site Review Committee, Zoning Administrator, Parcel Review Chairperson, and Planning Commission may be appealed by an applicant or by any aggrieved party as provided by this section.

Administration and Interpretation: The following actions of the Planning Director and his/her staff may be appealed to the Planning Commission and then to the Board of Supervisors:

- ☐ Determinations on the meaning or applicability of the provisions of this chapter that are believed to be in error, and cannot be resolved with staff.
- ☐ Any determination that a permit application or information submitted with the application is incomplete, pursuant to California Government Code Section 65943.

Land Use Permit and Hearing decisions: Rulings of the Environmental Review Committee, Design/Site Review Committee, Zoning Administrator, and Parcel Review Chairperson may be appealed to the Planning Commission and then to the Board of Supervisors. Rulings of the Parcel Review Chairperson related to road improvement requirements may be appealed to the Director of Public Works (see Section 16.20.090 of the Placer County Code) and then to the Board of Supervisors. Rulings of the Planning Commission may be appealed directly to the Board of Supervisors. Rulings of the development review committee and the environmental review committee may be appealed to the hearing body having original jurisdiction in the matter being appealed.

Who May Appeal: An appeal may be filed by any of the following:

- ☒ An applicant affected by an administrative action or interpretation of the Planning Director or the Planning Director's designee including decisions of the Environmental Review Committee or Design/Site Review Committee.
- ☐ An applicant or party who, either in person or through a representative explicitly identified as such, appeared at a public hearing of the Zoning Administrator, Parcel Review Committee or Planning Commission, and provided oral testimony to the decision being appealed, or who otherwise informed the county in writing of the nature of his/her concerns prior to or during the hearing, excepting therefrom actions taken to approve a Parcel Map or Subdivision Map, which shall have an automatic 10-day appeal period in accordance with Government Code Section 66452.5.
- ☐ Application fees are required to be paid in full at the time of application submittal. The most current version of the Planning Services Division Fee Schedule is available [here](#).

Timing and Form of Appeal: An appeal must be filed within ten days of the decision that is the subject of the appeal, excepting therefrom each instance where the 10th calendar day falls on a weekend or holiday

wherein the appeal period shall be extended by one business day. Appeals filed more than ten days after the decision shall not be accepted. A notice of appeal shall be in writing, shall specify the decision or portion of the decision being appealed, shall include a detailed state of the factual and/or legal grounds upon which the appeal is being taken and shall include other information required by the Planning Director. The appellant shall provide to the Planning Division all written materials which the applicant desires the appellate body to consider at the appeal hearing within thirty (30) calendar days of the appeal filing, including, if applicable, any proposed changes to the project. The appeal shall be accompanied by the filing fee set by the most current planning department fee schedule. **Appeals filed more than 10 days after the decision shall not be accepted by the Planning Division.**

Effect of Filing: In the event of an appeal, the decision being appealed shall be set aside and of no effect until final action by the appeal body pursuant to this section.

Time Limits on Appeals: Upon receipt of an appeal in proper form, the Planning Director or Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, as applicable, shall schedule the matter for consideration by the appropriate appeal body. The appeal body shall commence a public hearing on the appeal within ninety days of its proper filing, or within such other time period as may be mutually agreed upon by the appellant, in writing, and the appeal body, in writing. If the public hearing is not commenced within ninety days, or an alternative time period is not agreed upon by the appellant and the appeal body, the decision rendered by the last hearing body shall be deemed affirmed. (Note: Once commenced, a public hearing on an appeal may be continued from time to time for good cause.)



August 24, 2020

To: County of Placer

Re: Denial of Sign Permit request - General Plumbing Supply Sign (PLN20-00134)

APPEAL

Dear Sir / Madam,

Capital City Signs and General Plumbing are formally appealing the decision made by staff regarding the sign permit application.

We first contacted the County in March 2020, spoke to the planning department and then Mr. Bedell. We were provided information for the allowances, setbacks, height and type of signage allowed. We then prepared our proposal for the client and submitted plans to the county. The staff came back with height and set back issues that we addressed and re-submitted. After several weeks of communication back and forth with Mr. Dobbs, we were told the signs will not be approved. I challenged this based on the info we were provided from the sign code-. See below:

Animated signs are prohibited per 17.54.170-D-2. Animated Signs. Signs with any moving, rotating, flashing, or otherwise animated light or component, except for time and temperature displays and electronic changeable copy signs with cycle rates longer than three seconds, and traditional barber poles.

In conclusion, we are not asking for something out of the ordinary and our submittal meets the code as written. The client is a long standing, taxpaying company that is a staple of the community. This sign design is very tasteful and would enhance the corridor.

Please re-consider the denial decision.

Thank You,

Richard Sampognaro, CEO
Capital City Signs, Inc

SITE ADDRESS: 13957 Bowman Rd., Auburn, CA 95603

Jurisdiction: Placer County

APN #: 053-060-043-000

COVER SHEET



All work shall conform to:
2019 California Building Code
2019 California Electrical Code
2019 California Fire Code
2019 Energy Code, and any local code requirements



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SCALE: 1/2" = 40'

MUNICIPAL APPROVAL

CCS APPROVAL

Sign Here

Date

CUSTOMER APPROVAL

Sign Here

Date

LANDLORD APPROVAL

Sign Here

Date



916-348-9378
EST/INVOICE: 45571/45789

CLIENT: General Plumbing Supply
CONTACT: Wendy
ADDRESS: 13957 Bowman Rd
Auburn CA
PHONE: _____
EST/INVOICE: 45571/45789

JOB SITE: Same
ADDRESS: Same
EMAIL: _____

INFO
4/27/20
Permit Drawing
KH

This is an original drawing by Capital City Signs Inc. It is submitted for your personal use in connection with a project being planned for you by CCS, Inc. It is not to be reproduced, copied, or exhibited in any fashion without the written permission of CCS, Inc. Please Note: Colors as displayed on this Conceptual Drawing are for presentation purposes only. Actual colors of final products may vary.

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Type: | D/F Illuminated Monument w/ Top Cabinet and LED reader board |
| Illumination: | Principal LED - Qwik Mod 3, white |
| Square Footage: | 100 sq ft (54 sq ft cabinet, 42 sq ft LED board) |
| To Grade: | 24'-0" |

| | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Jurisdiction: | Placer County |
| APN #: | 053-060-043-000 |



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SCALE: 1/2" = 2'

PER 2019 CEC
PER 2019 CBC



CLIENT: General Plumbing Supply
CONTACT: Wendy
ADDRESS: 13957 Bowman Rd
Auburn CA
PHONE:
EST/INVOICE: 45571/45789

JOB SITE: Same
ADDRESS: Same
EMAIL:

INFO

4/18/20
6/18/20
Permit Drawing
Permit Revision

KH
KH

This is an original drawing by Capital City Signs Inc. It is submitted for your personal use in connection with a project being planned for you by CCS, Inc. It is not to be reproduced, copied, or exhibited in any fashion without the written permission of CCS, Inc. Please Note: Colors as displayed on this Conceptual Drawing are for presentation purposes only. Actual colors of final products may vary.



June 29, 2020

Capital City Signs c/o Steve Sampognaro
4807 Auburn Blvd.
Sacramento, CA 95841

SUBJECT: Incomplete Application – General Plumbing Supply Sign Permit (PLN20-00134)

Dear Mr. Sampognaro,

Planning Services Division staff has completed an initial review of the above-referenced application proposing construction of new commercial sign for the General Plumbing Supply store located at 13957 Bowman Road in the Auburn Area. Staff's review of your proposal has resulted in the following project description:

Application to construct a 24-foot tall freestanding monument sign with an internally illuminated cabinet sign, and separate LED digital sign. The upper sign consists of a 4'-6" tall x 12' wide (54 square foot) internally lit upper cabinet sign with white background and blue "General Plumbing Supply" lettering adjacent to a gold and blue corporate logo symbol. The lower sign includes a 5'-6" tall x 7'-10" wide (42 square foot) full-color LED digital display changeable copy reader board. The proposed cumulative sign copy area for both the cabinet sign and LED display is 96 square feet.

If the above project description is inaccurate or incomplete please contact the project's assigned planner so that the information can be corrected.

Based on the information provided with the first submittal staff has determined that the application is incomplete and that additional information is necessary to continue processing the sign application. With the second submittal please provide responses and include revised exhibits that address the following areas of concern:

Design Guidelines for Signs

It is staff's opinion that the proposed electronic LED digital display signage is not appropriate for advertisement of the current land use. Moreover, staff has concerns that the LED portion of the sign is not compatible with the character of surrounding rural

Bowman area community. Community streetscapes along the Interstate 80 corridor have accumulated an overabundance of signs that has resulted in visual distraction and loss of individual sign messaging. Such advertising overload can leave a negative visual impression of the area itself.

Changeable copy LED signage is typically associated with the image and branding of entertainment venues or used to communicate public service announcements that requires posting frequently changing information. It is staff's opinion that the public perception of "glitzy" LED advertising is out of balance with surrounding commercial businesses in the Bowman area. Furthermore, LED digital displays typically use bright light sources and allow for a multitude of colors which are discouraged by the County's sign design guidelines.

Animated Signs Prohibited

Pursuant to subsection 17.54.170.D.2 animated signs are prohibited. Animated signs include signs with any moving, rotating, flashing, or otherwise animated light or component, except for time and temperature displays and electronic changeable copy signs with cycle rates longer than three seconds, and traditional barber poles. Although the applicant has indicated changeable copy cycle rates would exceed three seconds, as described above, staff does not support approval of LED signage at this location, and for the existing land use.

Staff requests that the applicant revise the proposed sign exhibits and remove the LED display component.

Other

- In addition to the proposed internal cabinet lighting, does the project include any external lighting that is physically detached from the sign? If so, provide typical details and fixture specifications for all new lighting.
- The sign elevation exhibit submitted shows the proposed sign location in proximity to overhead utility lines. The County's Engineering and Surveying Division is currently reviewing the project application and may have additional comments and/or recommended permit conditions related to this application.
- The project location is within the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency's (PCTPA) Auburn Airport Overflight Area. PCTPA is currently reviewing the proposed sign and may have additional comments and/or permit conditions related to this application.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
RESOURCE AGENCY

This application has been deemed **incomplete** in accordance with Zoning Ordinance Section 17.58.050 and is placed on hold for 30 days pending submittal of information in response to staff's comments above. Please submit a cover letter with detailed responses and revised electronic plans to my attention when complete. Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact me by phone at 530-745-3060 or by email at pdobbs@placer.ca.gov.

Best regards,



Patrick Dobbs, Senior Planner
Planning Services Division

Cc: Project File
Richard and Evelyn Amaro, P.O. Box 4666, Walnut Creek, CA 94596

From: [Rich Sampognaro](#)
To: [Patrick Dobbs](#); [Steve Sampognaro](#); [Rhonda Sampognaro](#)
Cc: [Ed BeDell](#); [Eric Griffin](#); [David Melko](#); [Supervisor Gore](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: General Plumbing Supply
Date: Tuesday, June 30, 2020 8:55:06 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.jpg](#)
[image003.jpg](#)
[image004.png](#)

Mr. Dobbs,

As per my conversations and the email provided by Mr. BeDell, excerpt noted here...

Animated signs are prohibited per 17.54.170-D-2. Animated Signs. Signs with any moving, rotating, flashing, or otherwise animated light or component, **except** for time and temperature displays and **electronic changeable copy signs with cycle rates longer than three seconds**, and traditional barber poles.

Why are you changing the rules in the middle of the game?

I did my homework, reviewed the sign guidelines, and provided sign plans to your office. The comments that came back pertained to setbacks and height restrictions. We provided the requested changes, re-submitted and now your saying "Staff doesn't support approval"

-

This makes it very difficult to work with my clients in a professional manner not to mention making us look inept.

Please reconsider your decision or provide contact info to appeal

Best Regards,



Rich Sampognaro

CEO

916-348-9378

4807 Auburn Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95841

Rich@ccssac.com

www.ccssac.com

Certified Small Business State of CA DGS #62472

DIR #1000042830

SMUD SEED certified

UL Listed Manufacturer

Contractor License #753940



August 19, 2020

Capital City Signs
Steve Sampognaro
4807 Auburn Blvd.
Sacramento, CA 95841

RE: Denial of Sign Permit request - General Plumbing Supply Sign (PLN20-00134)

Mr. Sampognaro,

On May 20, 2020, Placer County received your application submitted for the above-referenced sign permit application proposing construction of new freestanding commercial sign for the General Plumbing Supply store located at 13957 Bowman Road in the Auburn Area. On June 2, 2020, the application fee was paid and County staff commenced review of the sign permit request. Based on the application materials submitted, on June 29, 2020, Planning Services Division staff deemed the application incomplete (Attachment A) and requested additional information, and modifications to the proposed sign to comply with Placer County sign standards and guidelines.

The specific issue that resulted in the initial incomplete determination was the proposed 5'-6" tall x 7-10" wide (42 square foot) full-color light-emitting diode (LED) digital display changeable copy reader board sign. In the incomplete application letter staff requested the LED sign component be removed from the proposed sign for the following reasons:

- Proposed sign is not compatible with the rural character of the surrounding Bowman area community;
- Type of sign proposed is discouraged in the County's Sign Design Guidelines; and
- Animated signs are prohibited pursuant to subsection 17.54.170 (D) (2) of the Placer County Zoning Ordinance.

ANALYSIS

In your June 30, 2020, email response you state, among other things, that the proposed LED sign image cycle rates will exceed three seconds and therefore is consistent with Placer County Zoning Ordinance subsection 17.54.170 (D) (2).

Staff has reviewed the applicable sections of the Zoning Ordinance, as well as correspondence by the applicant. At issue is the fact that two separate code sections conflict with each other in regard to allowable illumination of signs.

Section 17.54.170 (D)(2) (Prohibited Signs and Sign Materials – Animated Signs) states:
“Signs with moving, rotating, flashing, or otherwise animated light or component, except for time and temperature displays and electronic changeable copy signs with cycle rates longer than three seconds, and traditional barber poles.”

Section 17.54.170 (F) (Illumination of Signs) states:
“Any lighted shall be illuminated only by continuous and stationary light sources. .
. Flashing or intermittent lights are allowed only as provided in subsection (D)(2) of this section (Prohibited Signs and Sign Materials), for time and temperature displays.”

While Section (D)(2) allows for time and temperature displays as well as electronic changeable copy signs with cycle rates longer than three seconds, Section (F) prohibits all intermittent lighting, with exceptions only for time and temperature displays.

DIRECTOR’S DETERMINATION

Placer Zoning Ordinance Section 17.02.050 assigns the responsibility and authority to interpret the requirements of the Ordinance to the Planning Director. In addition, Section 17.02.050 (D)(1) provides the Planning Director methodology to evaluate conflicting provisions in the Ordinance, by establishing that, “in cases where conflicts occur between different requirements of this chapter (Chapter 17, the Zoning Ordinance) then the most restrictive (section) shall apply”.

As provided in the analysis above, it is the determination of the Planning Director that Section 17.54.170 (F), which prohibits intermittent lights (changeable copy), with the exception of time and temperature displays, is more restrictive than Section 17.54.170 (D)(2) which also allows for electronic changeable copy signs with cycle rates longer than three seconds and traditional barber poles.

Therefore, pursuant to Section 17.02.050 (D)(1), it is the determination of the Planning Director that LED changeable copy signs, other than for time and temperature displays, and regardless of the length of time of the cycle rate, are determined to be inconsistent with the Zoning Ordinance.

Appeals

Pursuant to Section 17.60.110 of the Placer County Zoning Ordinance the Planning Director's decision may be appealed to the Planning Commission. Appeals must be filed within ten days of the decision (August 19, 2020) that is the subject of appeal.

Regards,



Patrick Dobbs, Senior Planner
Planning Services Division

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment A – June 29, 2020 Incomplete Application Letter

Cc: Project File
Richard and Evelyn Amaro, P.O. Box 4666, Walnut Creek, CA 94596